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INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 02165

SOUTHCOS ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
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SUBJECT: COLOMBIAN COMMUNISTS WANT TO TAKE OVER FARC
REF: BOGOTA 1956

11. CONFIDENTIAL -- ENTIRE TEXT.

12. SUMMARY: ROBERTO SAENZ VARGAS, YOUNGER BROTHER OF FARC LEADER ALFONSO CANO (NOM DE GUERRE OF GUILLERMO LEON SAENZ VARGAS), AND FARC GO-BETWEEN MORRIS ACKERMAN SEPARATELY HAVE TOLD POLOFF THAT HARDLINERS WHO NOW CONTROL THE COLOMBIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCC), HAVE DETERMINED TO WORK TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE COLOMBIAN REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES (FARC) INSURGENT GROUP AS WELL AS GUERRILLA PEACE TALKS WITH THE GOVERNMENT. THE PCC'S FIVE-MEMBER SECRETARIAT WOULD REPLACE THE FARC'S, AND AS DID SALVADORAN PARTY CHIEF SCHAFIK HANDAL, PCC GENERAL SECRETARY ALVARO VASQUEZ DEL REAL WOULD HEAD THE GUERRILLA NEGOTIATING TEAM. IN OUR VIEW, FARC HEAD MANUEL MARULANDA VELEZ WOULD ALLOW THAT TO HAPPEN "ONLY OVER HIS DEAD BODY." END SUMMARY.

COMMUNISM'S COLLAPSE HAS ONLY SERVED TO HARDEN PCC

13. RECENT CHANGES IN COLOMBIA AND THE REST OF THE WORLD, INCLUDING THE COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM INTERNATIONALLY, ACCORDING TO ACKERMAN, HAVE ONLY HARDENED THE ORTHODOX COLOMBIAN PARTY'S RESOLVE IN FAVOR OF PROLONGED CAMPESINO-BASED ARMED STRUGGLE (THROUGH THE FARC). SAENZ, WHO QUIT THE PARTY IN NOVEMBER, CALLED THE PCC "THE ONLY COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE WORLD THAT HASN'T CHANGED." ACCORDING TO SAENZ AND ACKERMAN, THE PCC'S DECISION TO TAKE OVER THE FARC STEMS PARTIALLY FROM ITS DISSATISFACTION WITH THE GUERRILLAS' CONDUCT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS (NOW RECESSED) WITH THE GOVERNMENT. THE PCC IS NOT HAPPY THAT UNDER CANO, THE CHIEF GUERRILLA NEGOTIATOR, THE TALKS WERE ALLOWED TO DRIFT INTO NOTHING MORE THAN NEGOTIATIONS FOR A CEASE FIRE (IN WHICH THE PCC HAS NO INTEREST), AND ACCOMPLISHED FEW OF THE GUERRILLAS' AND THE PCC'S POLITICAL OBJECTIVES.

REYES AND CHACON: MR. INSIDE AND MR. OUTSIDE

14. TWO PERSONS EXPECTED TO PLAY KEY ROLES IN THE PARTY'S EFFORTS TO TAKE OVER THE INSURGENCY ARE FARC SECRETARIAT MEMBER RAUL REYES, LONG "THE PARTY'S MAN" IN THE FARC'S FIVE-MEMBER DIRECTORATE, AND PCC ORGANIZATION SECRETARY AND SECRETARIAT MEMBER MILLER CHACON (NOM DE GUERRE: "MISAELE"). ACKERMAN SAID THAT EACH DAY SOMEONE FROM THE PCC'S SECRETARIAT TRAVELS TO VISIT THE FARC'S. THE PCC IS AFRAID TO LEAVE THE FARC'S HIERARCHY ALONE FOR EVEN A MINUTE, ACKERMAN SAID.

WILL ANYONE IN FARC TOP BRASS STOP THE PARTY?

15. OF THE FARC'S FIVE SECRETARIAT MEMBERS, ACKERMAN SAID THE PCC HOPES TO WIN OVER FARC HEAD MANUEL MARULANDA VELEZ (AKA "TIROFIJO"); THAT WOULD INSURE THE ACQUIESCENCE OF TIMOLEON JIMENEZ, TIROFIJO'S PROTEGE. THE PCC ALSO HOPES TO SET CANO AND IVAN MARQUEZ AGAINST ONE ANOTHER, NEUTRALIZING BOTH. RAUL REYES ALREADY IS FIRMLY IN THE PARTY'S CAMP. WHILE ACKERMAN SAW TIROFIJO ("MORE A GUERRILLA THAN A COMMUNIST") AS THE MAIN OBSTACLE TO THE REALIZATION OF THE PARTY'S GOAL, SAENZ DIDN'T THINK ANYONE INSIDE THE FARC SECRETARIAT, ALL PARTY MEMBERS, POSED A PROBLEM. SAENZ SAID THAT MORE OF A HINDRANCE WAS THE PCC'S OWN SECRETARIAT, NOT ALL OF WHOM AGREE ON TAKING DIRECT CONTROL OF THE INSURGENCY.

THE FARC IS ALL THE PARTY HAS LEFT

16. SAENZ AND ACKERMAN AGREED THAT ANOTHER PCC MOTIVATION WAS THE DETERIORATION OF ITS INFLUENCE OVER OTHER, MOSTLY URBAN SECTORS OF COLOMBIAN SOCIETY, INCLUDING TRADE UNION (E.G., CUT, AND THE PETROLEUM WORKERS' USO) AND ARTISTIC MOVEMENTS (E.G., THEATER AND WRITERS GROUPS). FOR THE PCC, SAENZ SAID, "ONLY THE FARC REMAINS." SAENZ SAID THE FARC CONTINUES TO HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF RURAL SUPPORT, SOME THROUGH INTIMIDATION.

CANO AND OTHER '80S HOPEFULS: PARTY'S LOST GENERATION

17. THE PARTY IN THE 1980S SENT SEVERAL BRIGHT, YOUNG ACTIVISTS TO THE FARC OSTENSIBLY TO PROVIDE THE CAMPESINO MOVEMENT WITH POLITICAL ADVICE. THEIR ACTUAL OBJECTIVE WAS TO EXTEND THE PARTY'S INFLUENCE OVER THE INSURGENCY, AS THE PARTY EARLIER HAD DONE WITH JACOBO ARENAS, WHO HEADED THE FARC UNTIL HIS AUGUST 1990 DEATH FROM A HEART ATTACK.

18. THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST OF THE 1980S CROP WAS ALFONSO CANO, OVER WHOM THE PCC REALIZES IT HAS LOST CONTROL. HE'S NOT THE ONLY ONE. SAENZ SAID THE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE OF BEING A GUERRILLA CHANGED THE YOUNG TURKS. MANY, ACCORDING TO ACKERMAN, UPON STRAPPING A GUN ON THEIR HIP AND GAINING SOME INDIVIDUAL POWER, NOT TO MENTION THE MONEY FROM THE GUERRILLAS' LUCRATIVE ACTIVITIES, BEGAN TO FEEL THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO TAKE ORDERS ANYMORE FROM PARTY LEADERS IN BOGOTA. IT IS PARTIALLY BECAUSE OF FAILURE OF THE PREVIOUS EFFORTS TO INFLUENCE THE FARC THAT THE PARTY NOW WANTS TO TAKE FULL CONTROL OF THE GUERRILLA GROUP.

19. ACCORDING TO SAENZ, THE PROBLEM FOR THE PARTY IS DEEPER. ACCUSING PARTY LEADERS WHO HAVE NEVER RUN FOR PUBLIC OFFICE OF BEING DETACHED FROM "THE REAL WORLD," SAENZ, A FORMER CITY COUNCIL ALTERNATE AND UNSUCCESSFUL HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CANDIDATE, SAID BEING A GUERRILLA LEADER OR AN ELECTED OFFICIAL IS FAR DIFFERENT FROM BEING A PCC LEADER. "YOU BECOME AWARE OF REAL PEOPLES' CONCERNS, AND IT CHANGES YOU." IT CHANGED SCHAFIK HANDAL AND THE SALVADORAN PARTY, SAENZ SAID, AND IT WOULD CHANGE THE PCC.

PARTY TAKEOVER WOULD EXPOSE THE FARC FOR WHAT IT IS

110. FOR THAT REASON, SAENZ, DISAGREEING WITH ACKERMAN, THOUGHT IT WOULD BENEFIT THE PEACE PROCESS FOR THE PARTY TO TAKE OVER THE FARC AND THE TALKS. BESIDES, SAENZ SAID, SUCH A TAKEOVER WOULD REVEAL TO THE PUBLIC THE DECADES-LONG LINK BETWEEN THE PCC AND FARC, EXPOSING TO THE FARC'S RURAL SUPPORTERS THAT ITS AGENDA IS THE SAME COMMUNIST ONE DISCREDITED WORLDWIDE. SAENZ WOULD THEREFORE LIKE THE PCC TO COMPETE OPENLY IN ELECTIONS INSTEAD OF THROUGH ITS

ELECTORAL FRONT, THE PATRIOTIC UNION (UP).

¶11. COMMENT: BASED ON WHAT MOST SOURCES HAVE SAID ABOUT TIROFIJO, ALTHOUGH A LOYAL PARTY MEMBER, WE BELIEVE "ONLY OVER HIS DEAD BODY" WOULD HE LET ANYONE, EVEN THE PCC, TAKE OVER "HIS" MOVEMENT. FOR THAT REASON, THE PARTY'S GOAL OF TAKING OVER THE FARC HAS TO BE VIEWED AS A LONG-TERM PROJECT, WITH THE

POSSIBILITY OF BEING REALIZED ONLY AFTER TIROFIJO (IN HIS 60S) PASSES FROM THE SCENE. END COMMENT.

BUSBY